

In the Claims

Claims 1-31 (cancelled).

32. (previously presented) A tantalum disc comprising at least about 99.95 weight percent tantalum and a substantially uniform {100} crystallographic orientation across a surface of the disc.

33. (previously presented) The disc of claim 32 further comprising a maximum tantalum grain size of less than 50 microns at the disc surface

34. (previously presented) The disc of claim 32 further comprising an average grain size of about 25 microns.

35. (previously presented) The disc of claim 32 produced from a frictionless forged billet.

36. (previously presented) The disc of claim 32 having a thickness, wherein the disc comprises the substantially uniform {100} crystallographic orientation throughout the thickness.

37. (previously presented) The disc of claim 32 further comprising an average tantalum grain size of less than 50 microns at the disc surface.

38. (previously presented) A tantalum disc comprising at least about 99.95 weight percent tantalum and a maximum grain size of less than 50 microns.

39. (previously presented) The disc of claim 38 produced from a frictionless forged billet.

40. (currently amended) A tantalum disc comprising an average grain size of about 25 microns and a maximum grain size of less than 50 microns.

41. (canceled).

42. (previously presented) A tantalum disc comprising at least about 99.95 weight percent tantalum; the disc having a thickness and a maximum grain size of less than 50 microns throughout the thickness; the disc also comprising a substantially uniform {100} crystallographic orientation throughout the thickness.

43. (previously presented) The disc of claim 42 comprising an average tantalum grain size of less than 50 microns throughout the thickness.

44-46 (canceled).

47. (previously presented) A tantalum plate comprising at least about 99.95 weight percent tantalum and a substantially uniform {100} crystallographic orientation across a surface of the plate.

48. (previously presented) The plate of claim 47 further comprising a maximum tantalum grain size of less than 50 microns at the plate surface

49. (previously presented) The plate of claim 47 further comprising an average grain size of about 25 microns.

50. (previously presented) The plate of claim 47 produced from a frictionless forged billet.

51. (previously presented) The plate of claim 47 having a thickness, wherein the plate comprises the substantially uniform {100} crystallographic orientation throughout the thickness.

52. (previously presented) The plate of claim 47 further comprising an average tantalum grain size of less than 50 microns at the plate surface.

53. (previously presented) A tantalum plate comprising at least about 99.95 weight percent tantalum and a maximum grain size of less than 50 microns.

54. (previously presented) The plate of claim 53 produced from a frictionless forged billet.

55. (currently amended) A tantalum plate comprising an average grain size of about 25 microns and a maximum grain size of less than 50 microns.

56. (canceled).

57. (previously presented) A tantalum plate comprising at least about 99.95 weight percent tantalum; the plate having a thickness and a maximum grain size of less than 50 microns throughout the thickness; the plate also comprising a substantially uniform {100} crystallographic orientation throughout the thickness.

58. (previously presented) The plate of claim 57 comprising an average tantalum grain size of less than 50 microns throughout the thickness.

59. (canceled).

60. (canceled).

61. (previously presented) A plate comprising at least about 99.95 weight percent tantalum and an average grain size of less than about 25 microns.

62-67 (canceled).

68. (previously presented) A tantalum target blank comprising:

- (a) at least about 99.95 weight percent tantalum; and
- (b) a substantially uniform {100} crystallographic orientation throughout the thickness of said blank.

69. (previously presented) The tantalum target blank of claim 68 comprising a sputtering target.

70. (previously presented) The tantalum sputtering target of claim 69 produced from a frictionless forged billet.

71. (previously presented) The tantalum sputtering target of claim 69 having an average grain size of less than 50 microns at the target surface.

72. (previously presented) The tantalum sputtering target of claim 69 having an average grain size of less than 25 microns at the target surface.

73. (currently amended) A tantalum sputtering target comprising:

- (a) at least about 99.95 weight percent tantalum; and
- (b) a substantially uniform texture across a surface and throughout a thickness of the target.

74. (previously presented) An as-rolled tantalum target comprising:

- (a) at least about 99.95 weight percent tantalum; and
- (b) a substantially uniform {100} crystallographic orientation across a surface of said target.

75. (previously presented) The as-rolled tantalum target of claim 74 having an average grain size of less than 50 microns at the target surface.

76-82 (canceled).